Safeguarding the interest of farming community

115. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government intend to safeguards the interest of Indian farming community by providing them suitable tariff protection in view of removal of quantitative restrictions; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) With a view to protecting the interest of the agricultural sector and farmers from cheaper imports int > the country, the tariff levels have been bound by India, for prirrary agriculural products processed agricultural products and edible oils, with a few exceptions, at 100%, 150% and 300%, respectively. Therefore, import of agricultural commodities into India can be suitably regulated by imposing appropriate tariffs within the bound levels for protecting the interest of the farmers. Governments has been using import tariff as an instrument to discourage imports wherever necessary and to protect the interest of the farmers Governments has in the recent past increased the basic import tariffs on a number of agricultural items as under:

s. No.	Items		Basic Customs Duty (in %age)
1.	Wheat		50
2.	Maize (corn) seed		50
3.	Rice in Husks		SO
4.	Husked (Brown) Rice		80
5.	Semi-milled or wholly whether or not polished	Milled Rice or glazed	70
6.	Broken Rice		80
7.	Grain Sorghum		50

s. No.	Items	Basic Customs Duty (in %age)
8.	Millet	50
9.	Sugar	60 (in addition to a countervail-ing duty of Rs. 850 per tonne.)
10.	Soyabeen Oil refined	45
11.	RBD Palmolein refined	65
12.	Palm Oil, refined	65
13.	Groundnut oil refined	45

New Agriculture Policy

116. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have announced a New Agriculture Policy; and

(b) if so, how the issues relating to improving incentives to producers, rationalizing subsidies, promoting investments and extending protective cover to the poor have been addressed in the New Agriculture Policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes Sir. The first ever National Agriculture Policy was announced by Government on 28th July, 2000.

(b) The National Agriculture Policy states that Government will endeavour to create a favourable economic environment for increasing capital formation and farmer's own investments by removal of distortions in the incentive regime for agriculture, improving the terms of trade with manufacturing sectors and bringing about external and domestic market reforms, backed by rationalization of domestic tax structure. Commodity-wise strategies and arrangements for protecting the grower from adverse impact of undue price fluctuations